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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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R 051000Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3626
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 2185

CINCPAC FOR PTLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK
SUBJ: PAKISTAN AND THE LAHORE SUMMIT

SUMMARY: GOP FORESAW NUMBER OF POTENTIAL DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL BENEFITS ACCRUING TO PAKISTAN FOR HOSTING ISLAMIC SUMMIT. THERE WERE ALSO HAZARDS IN PROMOTING CONFERENCE WHICH COULD EASILY HAVE TAKEN VIRULENTLY ANTI-US TURN. BY AND LARGE, BENEFITS WERE REALIZED AND HAZARDS AVOIDED. GOP AND BHUTTO ADDED TO DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL PRESTIGE, PAK POPULACE GIVEN SUBSTANTIAL MORALE BOOST, AND PAK POSITION IN THIRD WORLD ENHANCED. IN POLICY AREA, GOP TTVOK STRONG PRO-ARAB STANCE AND
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HINTED AT MILITARY SUPPORT SHOULD MIDDLE EAST WAR

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RESUME. WHILE US SUBJECT TO CRITICISM AT SUMMIT, NEITHER US NOR MODERATE NON-ARAB PARTICIPANTS GIVEN GROUNDS FOR SERIOUS OFFENSE. PERHAPS BIGGEST PLUS FOR PAKS WS USE OF SUMMIT AS VEHICLE FOR RECOGNIZING BANGLADESH. ONLY IN ADMITTEDLY CRUCUIAL ECONOMIC FIELD DID SUMMIT APPEAR TO FALL SHORT OF GOP HOPES. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH THE IDEA OF HOLDING AN ISLAMIC SUMMIT APPARENTLY ORIGINATED WITH TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, IT BECAME PRETTY MUCH PRIMIN BHUTTO'S PROJECT FROM THE OUTSET. HE SOLD LAHORE AS THE SITE, PERSUADED RELUCTANT PARTICIPANTS TO ATTEND, CHAIRED THE MEETING HIMSELF AND PERSONALLY SUPER-VISED VIRTUALLY EVERY ASPECT OF THE HOST COUNTRY ARRANGE-MENTS. THIS MESSAGE, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AMCONUSL LAHORE, COMMENTS ON THE JUST-CONCLUDED SUMMIT IN TERMS OF ITS RELATIONSHIP TO PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS.

2. BHUTTO UNDOUBTEDLY SAW MANY POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR PAKISTAN IN HOSTING THE ISLAMIC SUMMIT: DOMESTICALLY IT WOULD REINFORCE HIS OWN POSITION, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE FUNDAMENTALIST RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS WHERE MUCH OPPOSITION TO HIS REGIME IS CONCENTRATED. IT WOULD ALSO GIVE THE PEOPLE A MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST, AS WELL AS DIVERTING ATTENTION AT LEAST MOMENTARILY FROM INFLATION AND SHORTAGES. THE OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE GOP SOLIDARITY WITH THE ARAB CAUSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IN REFUTING OPPOSITION COMPLAINTS, STRESSED IN THE DECEMBER 1973 PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEBATE, OF LUKEWARM PAK SUPPORT FOR THE ARABS AND EXCESSIVE DEPENDENCE ON THE US. BENEFITS COULD ALSO HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED IN THE INTER-NATIONAL FIELD, INCLUDING A FINAL TRANSFORMATION OF PAKISTAN'S TARNISHED POST-1971 IMAGE, A BOOST FOR BHUTTO'S COVETED ROLE AS A MAJOR THIRD WORLD SPOKESMAN, A CHANCE TO DEMONSTRATE PAKISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE OF THE WEST, AND AN OPENING TO APPROACH OIL-RICH COLLEAGUES COLLECTIVELY AND INDIVIDUALLY FOR AID AND INVESTMENT.

3. THERE WERE ALSO, OF COURSE, POTENTIAL HAZARDS IN HOSTING THE SUMMIT, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE STAMPEDED INTO AN EXCESSIVELY ANTI-
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WEST POSITION OR A STANCE THAT WOULD HAMPER CURRENT MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS, FOR WHICH BHUTTO WOULD HAVE TO SHARE THE BLAME. AS BHUTTO PURSUED THE PROJECT, IT ALSO BECAME APPARENT THAT SEVERAL MUSLIM STATES, PROMINENTLY INCLUDING IRAN, WERE COLD TO THE IDEA AND NOT HAPPY WITH HIM FOR PUSHING IT.

4. ONE THOUGHT PROBABLY NOT IN BHUTTO'S MIND INITIALLY

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WAS THAT OF UTILIZING THE SUMMIT AS A STAGE FOR THE NECESSARY BUT POLITICALLY TOUCHY STEP OF RECOGNIZING BANGLADESH. ONCE HE BECAME AWARE OF ITS POTENTIAL VALUE IN THIS REGARD, HOWEVER, HE WENT AFTER IT WITH HIS CHARACTERISTIC ENERGY. PARADOXICALLY, THE ONE SEEMINGLY UNCALCULATED ASPECT OF THE SUMMIT MAY WELL PROVE THE SINGLE MOST USEFUL ACHIEVEMENT FOR PAKISTAN. BY PORTRAYING RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH AS BOWING TO THE DESIRES OF HIS MUSLIM BROTHERS, AND ESPECIALLY BY RINGING IN BOTH SADAT AND QADAFFI AS ENTHUSIASTIC ENDORSERS, BHUTTO EFFECTIVELY DISARMED MUCH OF THE REMAINING DOMESTIC OPPOSITION TO THE MOVE. EQUALLY IMPORTANT, HE MANAGED TO SOME EXTENT TO PROVIDE HIMSELF AN ALIBI SHOULD RECOGNITION SOUR THROUGH FAILURE TO ACHIEVE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE WAR CRIMES ISSUE. BHUTTO WILL BE IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION SHOULD THIS OCCUR BUT NOT AS UNCOMFORTABLE AS IF HE HAD GRANTED RECOGNITION ON HIS OWN.

5. IN ADDITION TO THE BANGLADESH ISSUE, THE GOP HAS OTHER REASONS FOR CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION OVER THE OUTCOME OF THE SUMMIT. THE PAK POPULACE DID INDEED GET A LIFT FROM SEEING THEIR COUNTRY, ONLY TWO YEARS AGO A DISCREDITED LOSER, SERVING AS HOST TO THE WORLD'S MUSLIMS. PAKISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE WAS FURTHERED BY ITS CREDITABLE HANDLING OF THE MANY PHYSICAL PROBLEMS OF HOSTING THE MEETING ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. BHUTTO ENHANCED HIS OWN POSITION BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND ABROAD THROUGH WHAT, BY VIRTUALLY EVERYONE'S RECKONING, WAS A REMARKABLY GOOD JOB AS HOST AND CHAIRMAN.

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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6. IN POLICY MATTERS BHUTTO ALIGNED PAKISTAN WITH THE ARABS TO AN EVEN GREATER EXTENT THAN IN THE PAST, GOING TO THE LENGTH OF SUGGESTING ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT PAKISTAN MIGHT INVOLVE ITSELF MILITARILY SHOULD HOSTILITIES RESUME IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WHILE THIS MAY BE LARGELY DISCOUNTED AS ONE OF THE DRAMATIC FLOURISHES WHICH ARE REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD (AND EVEN FURTHER DISCOUNTED BY THE LOGISTIC DIFFICULTIES OF AN APPRECIABLE PAK MILITARY ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST), BHUTTO'S PLEDGE, PLUS THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE CREATED HERE BY THE SUMMIT, MIGHT WELL MAKE SOME TOKEN PAK MILITARY ROLE NECESSARY IN A FUTURE ARAB-ISRAEL WAR.

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7. WHILE THE US WAS CRITICIZED BY NAME IN THE LAHORE DECLARATION AND WAS THE TARGET OF EVEN SHARPER CRITICISM IN THE SPEECHES OF MANY OF THE DELEGATES, WE COULD HAVE COME OFF CONSIDERABLY WORSE. WHETHER OR NOT THIS WAS A RESULT (AS THE PAKS PRIVATELY CLAIM) OF THE GOP'S EFFORTS, BHUTTO CAN TAKE REASONABLE SATISFACTION FROM HAVING AVOIDED SERIOUSLY OFFENDING THE US. SIMILARLY, WHILE BHUTTO MAY NOT HAVE EARNED POINTS FOR HIMSELF IN TURKEY, IRAN, INDONESIA AND OTHER STATES UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE SUMMIT FROM THE BEGINNING, THE LATTER SEEM TO HAVE BEEN MOLLIFIED THAT THE OUTCOME FAILED TO CONFIRM THEIR INITIAL FEARS. AMONG THE MORE ASSERTIVELY NON-ALIGNED PARTICIPANTS, BHUTTO CLEARLY IMPROVED PAKISTAN'S POSITION AND ITS CREDENTIALS FOR ASSOCIATION WITH THEM.

8. THE ONE AREA WHERE THE GOP MAY FEEL THE SUMMIT FELL SHORT OF PAKISTAN'S HOPES WAS IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD. WHILE THE SETTING UP OF A MULTI-LATERAL ECONOMIC COM-MISSION TO REPORT BACK WITHIN A MONTH MAY BE CONSIDERED

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PROGRESS OF SORTS, IT WAS FAR FROM THE TANGIBLE AID THE PAKS WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN FROM THEIR OIL-RICH FRIENDS. EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE A BANK, A FUND, OR TO OBTAIN CONCESSIONAL OIL PRICES WERE ALL UNSUCCESSFUL. BHUTTO, HOWEVER, TOOK A REALISTIC VIEW OF THIS LACK OF SUCCESS WHEN HE WARNED IN HIS CLOSING SPEECH THAT THESE WERE COMPLICATED AND DIFFICULT MATTERS WHICH WOULD TAKE MUCH ENERGY AND TIME TO REALIZE.

9. IN SUM, THE LAHORE CONFERENCE WAS FOR PAKISTAN PRETTY MUCH A SEEDING OPERATION -- A GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL QUEST FOR NEW RELATIONSHIPS AND A NEW, ENHANCED ROLE FOR PAKISTAN IN A REGION WHICH HAS COME TO HAVE GREAT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE NOT ONLY TO PAKISTAN BUT TO THE WORLD. PAKISTAN'S SATISFACTION WITH THE SUMMIT MAY BE QUALIFIED, BUT IT IS SOLID SATISFACTION NONETHELESS.
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